What to Do When Brakes Fail?

Worksheet

If brakes fail, pump the brake pedal firmly 3–5 times to restore pressure; engage the handbrake gradually; downshift to lower gears to slow the engine; and steer toward open space or an uphill road to stop safely.

Questions

1. Brake pedal becomes spongy while driving. First step?

A) turn off engine
B) pump pedal 3–5 times
C) accelerate to safety
D) pull handbrake hard

2. Pedal pumping didn't restore brakes. Next action?

A) press harder on pedal
B) engage handbrake gradually
C) honk the horn
D) turn off engine

3. Why downshift during brake failure?

A) to accelerate away
B) engine drag slows the vehicle
C) to signal other drivers
D) to reset the brake system

4. Brakes fail on a busy highway. Where to steer?

A) between traffic
B) toward the shoulder or uphill
C) into an oncoming lane
D) into parked cars

5. Brake pedal goes soft while descending a mountain. Procedure?

6. Brakes fail on a city street at 50 km/h. What actions?

7. Both pedal-and-handbrake are inoperative. Last resort?

8. Define: What is the first action if brakes fail?

9. Define: What if pedal pumping doesn't restore brakes?

10. Define: How does downshifting help in brake failure?

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Answer Key

1. B) pump pedal 3–5 times — Pumping rebuilds pressure in the brake circuit. Do this first.

2. B) engage handbrake gradually — Handbrake gradually applies mechanical braking while pedal pressure rebuilds.

3. B) engine drag slows the vehicle — Lower gears increase engine resistance/drag, providing braking without hydraulics.

4. B) toward the shoulder or uphill — Steer away from traffic and people. Uphill or shoulder offers safer deceleration.

5. 1. Pump pedal 3–5 times firmly 2. If still soft, engage handbrake gradually (not suddenly) 3. Downshift to 2nd or 1st gear 4. Steer vehicle to shoulder or uphill exit 5. Use parking brake if needed; signal hazard lights

6. 1. Pump pedal hard and fast (3–5 times) 2. If ineffective, handbrake ON slowly 3. Downshift from 3rd to 2nd 4. Steer toward curb or empty lot (not parked cars) 5. Honk horn, turn on hazards, and coast to stop

7. 1. Downshift aggressively to 1st gear 2. Steer for barrier, curb, or uphill to absorb impact 3. If all else fails, controlled collision into a non-vehicle target 4. Brace and call emergency (112 in Turkey)

8. Pump the brake pedal firmly 3–5 times to rebuild hydraulic pressure.

9. Engage the handbrake gradually (not suddenly) to avoid skidding while wheels still grip.

10. Lower gears increase engine drag/resistance, slowing the vehicle without relying on hydraulic brakes.

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